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General Assembly
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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 18 January 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have written on numerous occasions to draw international attention to the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the territory that constitutes the State of Palestine. In each letter, the most recent of which was conveyed on 15 January 2013, we have underscored our serious concerns about the grave breaches of international humanitarian and human rights laws being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, including its campaign of settlement colonization, which are destabilizing the situation and destroying the potential for peace.

In each letter, we have called on the international community, especially the Security Council, to uphold their obligations to respect and ensure respect for international law and to determine the necessary measures to compel Israel to end its war crimes and to salvage the prospects for peace. Regrettably, the Security Council remains in deadlock despite the clear consensus of positions on both the illegality of Israel's policies and practices against the Palestinian people and the urgent need to advance the two-State solution as the most viable solution to resolve this decades-long conflict.

Here, it is imperative to highlight the fact of the international consensus that Israel's illegal settlement policies specifically constitute the main threat to the vision of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security based on the pre-1967 borders, the main obstacle to a credible peace process, and a main source of instability, tension and mistrust. It is high time to act on this consensus to end the oppression, dispossession and denial of the rights of the Palestinian people and to usher in a long-awaited era of peace and stability.

Yet again, Israel has announced plans to construct another 198 illegal settlement units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. These plans, which come on the heels of recent provocative declarations regarding intentions to construct thousands of settlement units, include 84 units in the ultra-extremist illegal

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settlement of "Kiryat Arba" in Al-Khalil and 114 units in the illegal settlement of "Efrat", in grave contravention of all legal norms, including international humanitarian law, Security Council resolutions and the road map obligation to freeze all settlement activities.

Today, hundreds of Palestinians engaged once again in peaceful, popular resistance against and defiance of the occupation's illegal colonization practices as they gathered in Beit Iksa, north-west of Occupied East Jerusalem, to protest the Israeli confiscation of the village's land. This demonstration follows the establishment on 11 January of the Bab Al-Shams village in the so-called "E1" area as a means of non-violent civil protest against Israel's plans to illegally establish a settlement there, which would sever the State of Palestine's contiguity and viability. Regrettably, following the forced removal of the peaceful demonstrators there, Israel continues to obstruct Palestinian access to the area. Nevertheless, in the same spirit of Bab Al-Shams, the activists in Beit Iksa set up a tent village, naming it Al-Karamah (Dignity), in protest of the land confiscation and the plans to encircle and isolate the village through Israel's annexation wall, a critical matter I raised in my letter of 10 January. In a statement made by one of the activists, it was stressed that the protest was intended, inter alia, to send "a message to Israel and all democratic societies that we are human and we want peace ... we are looking for a life without checkpoints, walls and settlements". Also today, a peaceful demonstration was held in the village of Izbat Al-Tabib in the Qalqilya area to protest the Israeli plans to demolish a school in the village.

In that connection, during this period Israel has persisted with its destruction of Palestinian properties. On 14 January, Israeli occupying forces demolished four Palestinian homes in the southern hills of Al-Khalil, including a home in the Um Al-Khair village belonging to Shuaib Hathaleen, a Palestine refugee, who has been unable to speak since suffering a stroke, resulting in the displacement of eight people, among them four children. The occupying forces also destroyed the home of a shepherd, Ziad Makhmari, in the area of Shakia, and the homes of Waleed Saljbor and Mohammad Ali Issa Atayet, rendering another 15 people homeless, in the midst of a severe winter.

The following day, on 15 January, Israeli occupying forces demolished the home of Nasser Rajabi, in an area north of Beit Hanina, where he had lived with his wife and six children. On the same day, a two-storey home in the town of Sur Baher, belonging to Aref Amera, age 71, and housing seven families, was destroyed by Israeli occupying forces. On 17 January, the occupying forces also continued their harassment of Bedouin families and destruction of their properties, demolishing around 70 Palestinian structures, including residential sheds and animal barns, belonging to 12 Palestinian families in Wadi Al-Maleh in the northern Jordan Valley.

At the same time, Israeli settlers continue their terror and rampage against Palestinian civilians and their properties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 13 January, an Israeli settler ran over Ali Jahalin, age 7, on his way to school in Abu Dis in the area of Occupied East Jerusalem, and the child was taken to hospital in critical condition. This settler practice of running over Palestinian children has become quite common, and the fears it has raised have now caused many Palestinian families to refuse to let their children travel to and from school unaccompanied.

This deplorable incident was followed on 15 January by a group of settlers setting up an illegal settlement on land belonging to a Palestinian family from the

town of Tuqu, east of Bethlehem. The settlers, under the protection of Israeli soldiers, attacked the family, injuring many and forcing the Palestinian owners to leave their land. In similar provocative actions, on 16 January, Israeli setters began to raze land to expand the illegal "Maskiyot" settlement in the northern Jordan Valley and the "Elon Moreh" settlement north-east of Nablus.

On 17 January, Israeli settlers uprooted 95 olive trees in the Hussan village, west of Bethlehem, belonging to two Palestinian families. This was preceded on 11 January by the destruction of more than 200 olive trees in the village of Qusra, near Nablus. This village, like so many others in the Nablus area, has been subjected to frequent violent attacks by extremist settlers from nearby illegal settlements as well as so-called "outposts". The Israeli Government continues to allow the perpetrators of these crimes to go unpunished, bolstering their sense of impunity and fostering such lawlessness.

As the international community continues to witness these relentless Israeli violations of the human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people, we must recall that many of these violations also constitute war crimes for which Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable. Without accountability, the prospects for reining in such illegal behaviour will remain remote, with far-reaching consequences for the objectives of attaining peace and security.

The Palestinian leadership remains committed to the path of peace and the two-State solution, recalling the significance of the compromise of accepting only 22 per cent of historic Palestine, a compromise made in the context of the international vision for a just peace and stability in our region. We thus continue to call on the international community, particularly the Security Council, in accordance with its duties under the Charter of the United Nations, to uphold their commitment to this vision and to act urgently and tangibly to ensure respect for the rule of law, including United Nations resolutions, to halt the deterioration of the situation and to salvage the two-State solution and the prospects for peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 450 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 15 January 2013 (A/ES-10/577-S/2012/23), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations